

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 198337

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, IN

SUBJECT: CALL BY NANAJI DESHMUKH IN THE DEPARTMENT

1. JANATA PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY NANAJI DESHMUKH CALLED ON DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AUGUST 3RD AT DEPARTMENT'S INITIATIVE FOR A BRIEF EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. ALSO PRESENT WERE NEA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MIKLOS, OXMAN OF D STAFF, AND COUNTRY OFFICER THIBAUT. DESHMUKH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY INDIAN EMBASSY MINISTER-COUNSELOR GOKHALE. MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL IN TONE AND ATMOSPHERE WITH DESHMUKH OBVIOUSLY PLEASED AT THE ATTENTION HE RECEIVED.

2. RESPONDING TO CHRISTOPHER'S REQUEST FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF INDO-U.S. RELATIONS, DESHMUKH SPOKE OF "THE HESITATION IN THE INDIAN MIND" AND "ELEMENTS OF TENSION" ARISING OUT OF OUR NUCLEAR DIFFERENCES. RELATIONS ARE MOVING
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IN A BETTER DIRECTION THAN IN THE PAST, BUT DESHMUKH THOUGHT THERE WAS MUCH THE U.S. COULD DO TO FURTHER IMPROVE OUR TIES. HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC, ALTHOUGH HE DID MAKE A PLEA FOR AN EXPANSION OF PRIVATE BILATERAL TIES. ON OTHER SUBJECTS, DESHMUKH DOWNPLAYED REPORTS OF PERMANENT RIFT

WITHIN JANATA RECALLING THAT IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT

FIVE DISPARATE PARTIES HAD MERGED AND THAT DIFFERENCES WERE BOUND TO EXIST. HE ALSO NOTED AN INGRAINED FACTIONALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS, IN EVIDENCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE, WHICH EXPERIENCED POLITICIANS LEARN TO LIVE WITH. HE WAS CATEGORICAL IN ASSERTING THAT JANATA WILL NOT SPLIT, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC PRESSURE IN THIS REGARD ON ALL OF JANATA'S COMPONENTS.

3. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GAVE HIS VIEW THAT WE WOULD WORK OUT OUR NUCLEAR DIFFERENCES AND THAT DEFINITE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE DURING THE DESAI VISIT IN CLARIFYING EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS. IN RESPONSE TO DESHMUKH'S QUESTION ON OUR PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN, CHRISTOPHER BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE NEWSOM VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA AND SPOKE OF OUR INTEREST IN BETTER AND MORE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. DESHMUKH MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO THESE OBSERVATIONS, INSTEAD INQUIRING ABOUT ALLEGED CHINESE INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTANI INTERNAL AFFAIRS, OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE RECENT KHOKORRAM ROAD PROJECT, DISCUSSION OF WHICH WE SIDESTEPED SAYING THAT WE WERE NOT AWARE THERE WAS A PROBLEM.

4. CHRISTOPHER CONCLUDED BY NOTING HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS TRAVEL TO INDIA WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD OCCUR IN EITHER NOVEMBER OR IN LATE JANUARY, REFERRING ALSO TO THE CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE WE HOPE TO HOLD IN SRI
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LANKA. DESHMUKH WARMLY URGED HIM TO EXTEND HIS VISIT TO INDIA TO INCLUDE MEETINGS WITH OTHER INDIAN LEADERS AND EXPRESSED A STRONG PERSONAL INTEREST IN SEEING CHRISTOPHER IN NEW DELHI.

5. DESHMUKH LATER LEFT FOR NEW YORK TO ATTEND THE FRIENDS OF INDIA SOCIETY MEETING THERE, AUGUST 5-6. HIS PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON INCLUDED VISITS TO VARIOUS YOUTH AND RECREATIONAL CENTERS ARRANGED WITH ICA'S ASSISTANCE, AS WELL AS MEETINGS WITH DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WHITE AND SENATOR STONE, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS.
CHRISTOPHER

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